

LISTING AND AMENDMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1-3 (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A method for forming hydrogel microspheres which will load a protein from aqueous solution, comprising the steps of

a) forming an aqueous solution of hydrogel precursors that are water soluble, denoted a first aqueous solution, where at least one of the hydrogel precursors of the first aqueous solution functions both as a crosslinker and as a monomer in hydrogel formation and is polyethylene glycol diacrylate where the poly (ethylene glycol) has a weight average molecular weight ranging from 2,000 to 35,000, and a ~~The method of claim 3 where the second hydrogel precursor of the first aqueous solution~~ is N-isopropylacrylamide.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4 where the polymer of the second aqueous solution is a water-soluble polysaccharide.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5 where the polymer of the second aqueous solution is dextran having a weight average molecular weight ranging from 40,000 to 80,000.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6 where the second aqueous solution contains a constituent to reduce the solubility of the dextran in water so that a two-phase aqueous system can be formed on the admixture of step (b).

8-9. (Canceled)